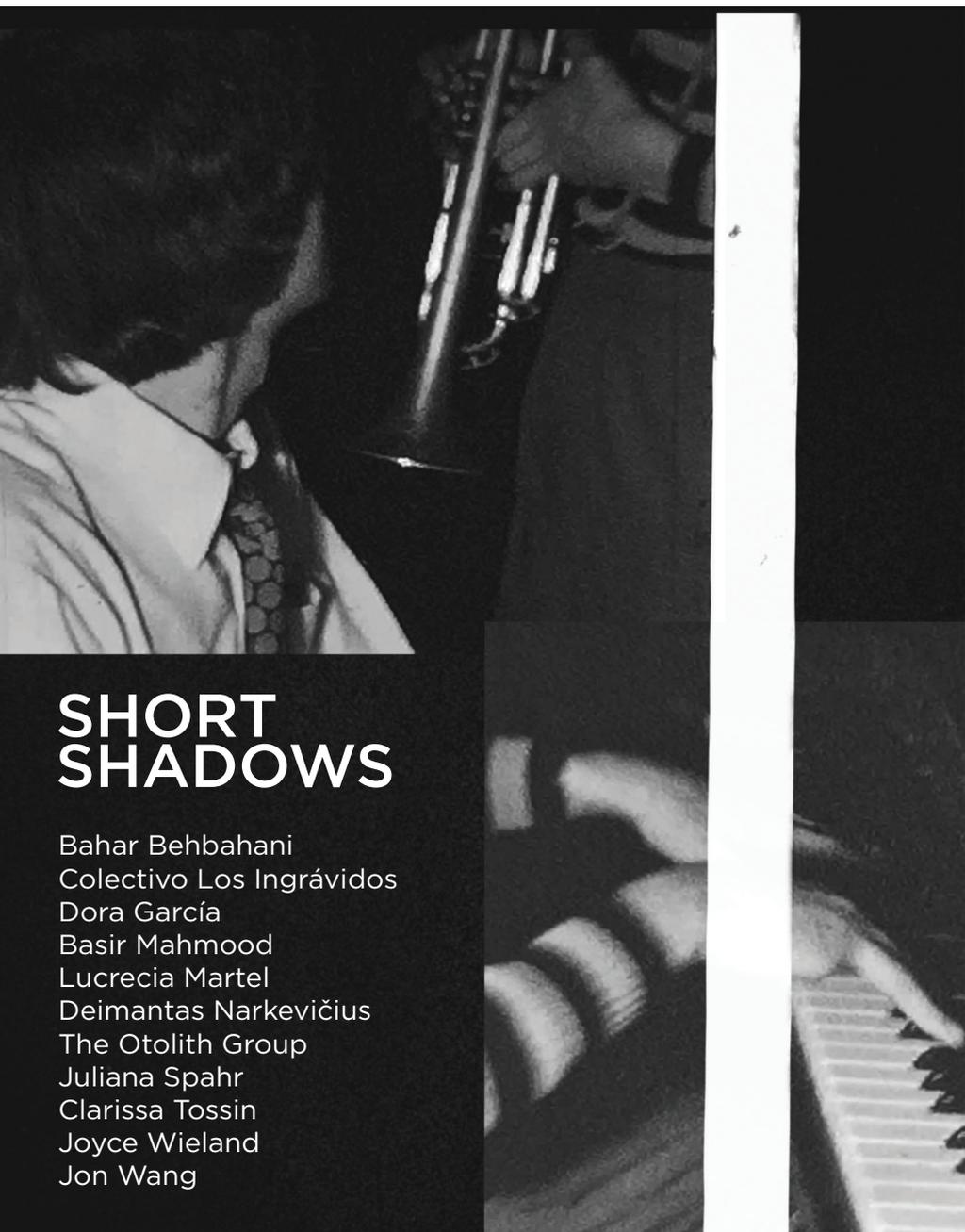


# EMPAC



## SHORT SHADOWS

Bahar Behbahani  
Colectivo Los Ingrávidos  
Dora García  
Basir Mahmood  
Lucrecia Martel  
Deimantas Narkevičius  
The Otolith Group  
Juliana Spahr  
Clarissa Tossin  
Joyce Wieland  
Jon Wang

# SHORT SHADOWS

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 31, 7PM**

**A life that is only circulations**

Juliana Spahr  
The Otolith Group  
Joyce Wieland

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 7PM**

**Leaving Traces**

Colectivo Los Ingrávidos  
Clarissa Tossin  
Lucrecia Martel

**FRIDAY, MARCH 29, 7PM**

**CCS Bard collaboration**

Bahar Behbahani  
and Jon Wang

**THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 7PM**

**Second Time Around**

Dora García  
Basir Mahmood  
Deimantas Narkevičius

This yearlong moving image series takes its cue from German thinker Walter Benjamin's two brief texts *Short Shadows* written in 1929. Comprised of fragmentary essays, or what Benjamin called "thought-figures" or "thought-images," the texts meditate on the fundamental relation between thought and language through specific reflections on phenomenology, art, astrology, and psychology. Some eight decades later, theorist Svetlana Boym borrowed Benjamin's title for a section of her notes on "the off-modern," or the paths not taken by the more canonical variants of Modernism. For Boym, the short shadow, like an imperfection on the surface of an image, designates an artistic strategy that has the potential to reveal the "porous nature of historical time."

Like Boym and Benjamin in their respective approaches, the artists presented in this series are concerned with the political importance of unexpected historical interconnections, and they advocate for a practice capable of attending to and moving within them. Mostly produced within the last decade, their films, videos, poems, and performances shine a light on cultural and historical events that may otherwise remain in shadow, and, whether anchored in real or fictional scenarios, each work stretches beyond a singular moment or place.

*Short Shadows* includes such varied films as Lucrecia Martel's restaging of a 1950s novel set in an 18th-century South American colony, Clarissa Tossin's reflection of Mayan influence on California Modernism, Deimantas Narkevičius's underground staging of *Jesus Christ Superstar* in early 1970s Vilnius, Dora García's fragmented reenactment of Buenos Aires happenings during the psychosis of the 1960s disappearances, and Basir Mahmood's gestures of contemporary "Lollywood" cinema. Much like these individual works, the series as a whole is elliptical in structure and form, presenting an entangled dramaturgy of cultural and political history. In so doing, it aims to articulate the inseparability of aesthetic, social, political, linguistic, territorial, and technological conditions, yet attempts to resist treating that inseparability as simply a set of straightforward themes or plot lines.

Shadows are fundamentally linked to the history of cinema, both technically (images produced literally by light and shadow) and also in terms of its basic metaphors: not the least of which being Plato's Cave (in which those held within see the shadows cast on the wall as real objects), or later with the shadow plays and phantasmagoria of early proto-cinematic experiments. Like cinema, however, what they also do is bind images to objects in a passage of time. But *Short Shadows* not only refers to the magic of cinema or phenomenological affect. It also suggests the disruption of cinematic illusion, a strategy fundamental to artists moving image and experimental film practices. *Short Shadows* alludes to the communal experience of an on-screen shadow cast by the late-arriving audience member, and revels in the deliberate disruption of a seamless phantasm by artists whose work endeavors to excavate the surface of such scenarios in order to reveal their formation.

—VIC BROOKS, SENIOR CURATOR, TIME-BASED VISUAL ART

## A LIFE THAT IS ONLY CIRCULATIONS

THE OTOLITH GROUP, JULIANA SPAHR, JOYCE WIELAND  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 31, 2019 AT 7PM / THEATER

### PROGRAM

**Juliana Spahr**, Reading of *Transitory, Momentary*  
From *That Winter the Wolf Came* (Commune Editions, 2015)  
**Joyce Wieland**, *Sailboat* (1965)  
**Otolith Group**, *I See Infinite Distance Between Any Point and Another* (2012)

The title for this episode of the *Short Shadows* series, “A life that is only circulations,” is borrowed from Bay Area poet Juliana Spahr’s *Transitory, Momentary*, a poem about loss shot through with reflections on the power of words, songs, and stanzas, set against the backdrop of the Occupy movement and the global circulation of oil and capital. Alongside a reading by Spahr, the program features two films made almost five decades apart, Joyce Wieland’s *Sailboat* (1965) and The Otolith Group’s *I See Infinite Distance Between Any Point and Another* (2012). Both films operate at the boundary between language and image, framed by the sea as a visual, poetic, and structural metaphor for exile, longing, and global circulatory connection.

An intimate portrait of artist and poet Etel Adnan as she reads from her book *Sea and Fog* in her apartment, *I See Infinite Distance Between Any Point and Another* explores the experiential gap between the act of reading and that of being read to. The camera intimately captures Adnan, closely framed and at oblique angles, allowing space for the poetry and poet to come into being. In comparison, Wieland’s lens focuses on a distant boat. The word “Sailboat” fills the sky, naming the film’s dialogic structure in a Godardian intersection of image and language. Like *I See Infinite Distance*, the film is at once intimate and distanced, technical and poetic, intertwining the lived experience at the moment of capture with a universal nostalgia for what has passed across the water.

Theorist Svetlana Boym has succinctly described such nostalgia visible in cinema as “a double exposure or superimposition of two images” that can form a durational map of geographical displacement, an ability to “revisit time like space.” Both films expand spatial displacements through words and images (each artist has experienced geographical dislocation across oceans at different moments of their lives). Thus, a sense of dislocated simultaneity is present in the structure of the films, each deliberately juxtaposing ways of communicating—image versus language or listening versus reading—to produce alternate time-scales that act together in a single image.

### BIOGRAPHIES

**THE OTOLITH GROUP** was founded in 2002 and consists of Anjalika Sagar and Kodwo Eshun who live and work in London. During their longstanding collaboration The Group have drawn from a wide range of resources and materials. Their work is research based and spans the moving image, audio, performance, installation, and curation. They incorporate film making and post-lens-based essayistic aesthetics that explore the temporal anomalies, anthropic inversions, and synthetic alienation of the posthuman, the inhuman, the non-human, and the complexity of the environmental conditions of life we all face. In 2010 The Otolith Group were nominated for the Turner Prize.

**JULIANA SPAHR** edits the book series Chain Links with Jena Osman and the collectively funded Subpress with 19 other people, and Commune Editions with Joshua Clover and Jasper Bernes. She is a contributing editor to *Commune Magazine*. With David Buuck she wrote *Army of Lovers*. She has edited with Stephanie Young *A Megaphone: Some Enactments, Some Numbers, and Some Essays about the Continued Usefulness of Crotchless-pants-and-a-machine-gun Feminism* (Chain Links, 2011), with Joan Retallack *Poetry & Pedagogy: the Challenge of the Contemporary* (Palgrave, 2006), and with Claudia Rankine *American Women Poets in the 21st Century* (Wesleyan University Press, 2002). Her most recent book is *Du Bois’s Telegram*. She is in process on a book with Stephanie Young and C. O. Grossman that examines the relationship between the grants and literary prizes awarded by private foundations and militancy.

Canadian artist **JOYCE WIELAND** (1931-1998) produced an acclaimed body of work across media, from drawing and painting to quilts and film. She gained a unique respect for incorporating strong personal statements in her work about issues of feminism, nationalism, and ecology. Her retrospective at the Art Gallery of Ontario was the first-ever afforded a living Canadian woman artist. Wieland worked for four years as a commercial artist before becoming associated with Canada’s Graphic Films, where she worked as an animator and got her first opportunity to produce short films for herself. She had her first one-woman show in 1960, and lived in New York with her partner, artist Michael Snow, from 1962 to 1971 where she continued to paint and gained recognition as a “Structural” filmmaker.

**IMAGE** (next page) Joyce Wieland, *Sailboat*, (1965).  
Courtesy of Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Center.

**sailboat**



## LEAVING TRACES

COLECTIVO LOS INGRÁVIDOS, LUCRECIA MARTEL, CLARISSA TOSSIN  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2019 AT 7PM / THEATER

### PROGRAM

**Colectivo Los Ingrávidos**, *Sangre Seca* (2018)

**Lucrecia Martel**, *Zama* (2018)

**Clarissa Tossin**, *Ch'u Mayaa* (2017)

"THE NIGHT IN THIS COUNTRY  
ITS CURDLED SHADOW  
OVER MY PIECE OF SKY"

—*OSCURO* BY MARÍA RIVERA, 2012

The second *Short Shadows* program brings together three moving image works that employ the surface of architecture, celluloid, and the body to make visible material traces of multiple temporalities erased by colonization and misogyny.

María Rivera recites her poem *Oscuro* over the red flickering texture of degraded 16mm film stock used by Colectivo Los Ingrávidos to capture the protest on March 8, 2017 against patriarchy and misogyny in Mexico City. *Sangre Seca* (Dried Blood), is exemplary of the collective's material approach to filmmaking. By exposing political struggle onto the surface of the celluloid that, while mechanically reproduced, degrades over time, the artists mark the repetition of violence and protest across multiple timescales: *Oscuro* was written in 2012 in response to atrocities against women in Salvador de Atenco in 2006, the March 8th protest takes place every year, and we watch the film together in the present moment.

Clarissa Tossin's *Ch'u Mayaa* meanwhile reveals the pervasive Mayan influence on iconic proto-Modernist American architect Frank Lloyd Wright's Hollyhock House. Negating Walter Benjamin's claim that Modernist architects, "with their glass and steel... created rooms in which it is hard to leave traces," choreographer and dancer Crystal Sepúlveda moves in and out of the shadows cast by the pastiche of indigenous motifs appropriated by Wright. Choreographically based on figures ubiquitous in ancient Mayan pottery and murals, Tossin at times superimposes multiple versions of the dancer across the frame, one of many acts of "re-signification" that restores the building into the Pre-Columbian Mesoamerican architectural lineage.

Argentinian filmmaker Lucrecia Martel's feature-length interpretation of the 1956 novel *Zama* by Antonio di Benedetto imagines an 18th-century South American colonial outpost. Focused on the spiraling despair of a subject desperate to prove his power within the hierarchy of Spanish colonial governance, Martel's camera lingers with characteristic attention to detail across the architecture and landscape that increasingly imprisons *Zama* in a psychedelic vision of subjugation.

### BIOGRAPHIES

**COLECTIVO LOS INGRÁVIDOS** is invested in using the capacity of the filmic medium to determine the experience of the image as an entity in itself, performed in the audience's space. Flares, fade-outs at the beginning and the end of the reels, grain and other qualities become intrinsic parts and evidence of the film as object. The surface of the screen and the materiality of the medium are as important as the images and the sound. The apparatus becomes a central element that works in relation to the image instead of being a simple carrier of images. Los Ingrávidos are invested in making the viewer aware of the medium, proposing a radical empiricism in which perception and knowledge are not necessarily the same thing. Form is content and content is form.

— Almodena Escobar Lopez (Vdrome, 2018)

Argentinian film director **LUCRECIA MARTEL'S** rich body of work has gained worldwide recognition since her debut feature, *La Ciénaga*, in 2001. Born in Salta in northwestern Argentina, Martel studied film in Buenos Aires during one of the country's worst economic crises, and eventually lent her worldview and sense of place to intimate, elliptical dramas that broke from the aesthetic and ideological tendencies of the prevailing national film scene. A singular artist, Martel combines a formal mastery—particularly through her attention to sound design—with a sensibility entirely her own, defined by atmosphere, mystery, and caustic humor alongside provocative critiques of class and patriarchy in Argentine society.

**CLARISSA TOSSIN** is an interdisciplinary artist based in Los Angeles, California. Using installation, video, performance, sculpture, and photography, she investigates material cultural production and the ways in which it simultaneously represents the hybridization of global cultures and the persistence of difference. Influenced by her childhood in Brazil's capital, Brasília, which was built as a modernist utopia, Tossin often centers her practice on investigating the promises, legacies, and failures of modernity, globalism, and utopian idealism.

## BAHAR BEHBAHANI AND JON WANG

FRIDAY, MARCH 29, 2019 AT 7PM / STUDIO 1—GOODMAN

### PROGRAM

Bringing together the work of New York-based artists and filmmakers Bahar Behbahani and Jon Wang, this event expands the format of the *Short Shadows* moving image series to include elements of performance, painting, and architecture. The evening will engage themes and processes of displacement and longing, as well as narratives of transformation that run through Wang and Behbahani's work.

New York-based Iranian artist Bahar Behbahani's work addresses her long-term conceptual dialogues with memory and loss. Through painting, video, and participatory performance, she revisits Iran's psychogeographic landscapes. The Persian garden, a contested space marked by colonialism and seductive beauty, is a reoccurring site for reflection and recovery.

Jon Wang generates films, sculptures, and performances that question notions of representation and desire. Wang's treatments of pace—at times drawing on techniques of voice-over narration, tenants of feng shui, and the day-to-day activities of silk worms—gesture towards the ways in which beings and their surroundings are in states of perpetual transition. In this sense, pace, as a techno-sensual material, both grounds and disrupts their atmospheric videos and installations.

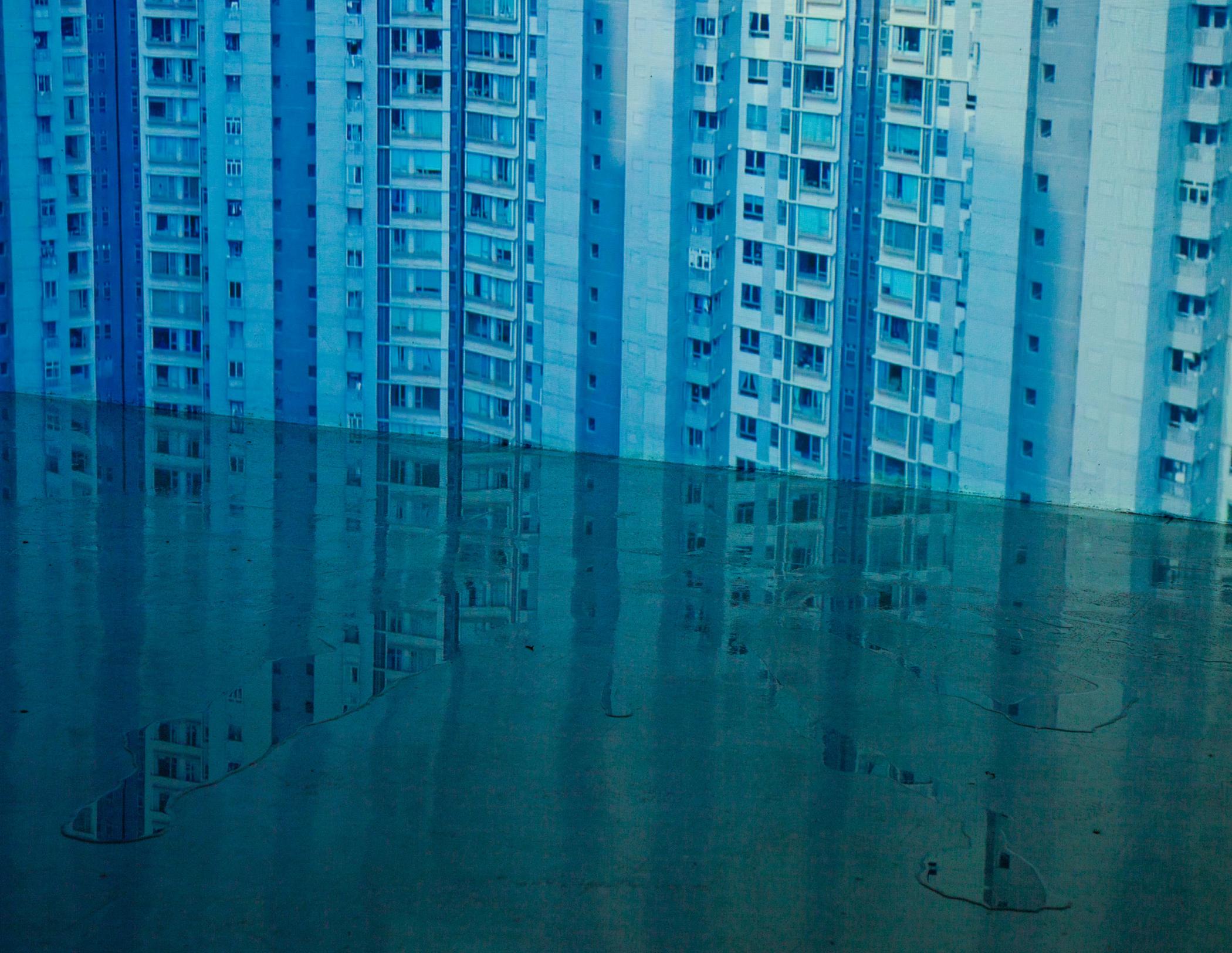
THE EVENT IS CO-ORGANIZED BY SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS FROM THE CENTER FOR CURATORIAL STUDIES, BARD COLLEGE, INCLUDING GIORGIA VON ALBERTINI, DREW BRODERICK, SUSANNAH FABER, SRINIVAS ADITYA MOPIDEVI, SERUBIRI MOSES, SUZIE SMITH, AND THEA SPITTLE.

### BIOGRAPHIES

**BAHAR BEHBAHANI'S** research-based practice approaches landscape as a metaphor for politics and poetics. Behbahani looks into cultural landscapes both historically and in a contemporary context, posing urgent questions that consider the ways in which people negotiate space and place. Through a range of media—such as painting, video, installation and performative talks—Behbahani layers Western archival matters, cartography, horticultural history, and our contemporary position into a new hybrid narrative. Her work was featured in the solo exhibition, *Let the Garden Eram Flourish*, curated by Ugochukwu-Smooth Nzewi, at the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College in 2017 and has been shown at Thomas Erben Gallery in New York, 11th Shanghai Biennale, China, 7th Moscow Biennale, Russia, and at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center in Greece in 2016. Behbahani's work is included in the permanent collections of the Queensland Museum, the Hood Museum of Art, and Sharjah Art Foundation, as well as numerous private collections.

**JON WANG** is a New York-based artist and filmmaker whose work explores animism, gender, and architecture. Their work has been exhibited and screened internationally at venues including the New York Film Festival, SculptureCenter, Venice Architecture Biennale, Triple Canopy, Petzel Gallery, Images Festival (Toronto), The Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive, & The Jim Thompson Art Center (Bangkok). Wang has been the recipient of numerous awards including the Princess Grace Film Award, the Ella Lyman Cabot Trust Award, and the Theresa Hyak Kyung Cha (BAMPFA), amongst others. Wang holds BA's in Art Practice and Social Anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley and an MFA in Film/Video from Bard College.

**IMAGE** (next page) Jon Wang, *From it's Mouth Came a River of High-end Residential Appliances* (2018). Courtesy of the artist.



## SECOND TIME AROUND

DORA GARCÍA, BASIR MAHMOOD, AND DEIMANTAS NARKEVIČIUS  
THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 2019 AT 7PM / THEATER

### PROGRAM

**Dora García**, *Segunda Vez* (2018)

**Basir Mahmood**, *all voices are mine* (2018)

**Deimantas Narkevičius**, *Stains and Scratches* (2018)

The final *Short Shadows* program of the season presents three moving-image works with narrative structures that orbit around performances from the past in order to make hidden histories visible.

Deimantas Narkevičius's *Stains and Scratches* focuses on found footage of an underground performance of *Jesus Christ Superstar* in Vilnius, Lithuania, during the 1970s. The show was performed by students at the Vilnius Academy of Art from a score re-written by ear from an unsanctioned double LP. Narkevičius further dislocates the documentation by layering and doubling the film onto a scratched black celluloid background, the soft-montage composition highlighted and rendered sculptural in Stereoscopic 3D.

One of a series of films produced during Basir Mahmood's research into "Lollywood" (Pakistan's center for cinema production in Lahore) history, the script for *all voices are mine* was derived from recollections of actors, filmmakers, and writers. The film is structured around reenactments of their scenes from previous films and is performed without dialogue, a dramaturgical approach that produces a film that is at once unfamiliar and recognizable. This collage technique produces an uncanny sense of a film that we have all seen, albeit one that is rehearsed only in memory.

Spanish artist Dora García's first feature, *Segunda Vez* (Second Time Around), pivots around avant-garde theorist Oscar Masotta's ideas concerning psychoanalysis, politics, and art in 1960s Buenos Aires. Structured by a series of interconnected re-enactments, re-stagings, and social experiments, the film shifts between documentary-style interpretations of past "happenings" and the fictional psychodrama of novelist Julio Cortázar. *Segunda Vez* weaves a complex narrative within the climate of surveillance and disappearances in Argentina, producing an acute sense of paranoia for what might happen the second time around.

### BIOGRAPHIES

**DORA GARCÍA** draws on interactivity and performance in her work, using the exhibition space as a platform to investigate the relationship between artwork, audience, and place. García transforms spaces into a sensory experiences by altering perception and creating situations of interaction, often using intermediaries (professional actors, amateurs, or people she meets by chance) to enhance critical thinking. By engaging with the binary of reality vs. fiction, visitors become implicated as protagonists either in the construction of a collective fiction or questioning of empirical constructions—sometimes knowingly, and sometimes not. García has had numerous solo exhibitions internationally. She has participated in international exhibitions including Manifesta 2, the 8th Istanbul Biennial, 17th Biennale of Sydney; Xe Biennale of Lyon; 2nd Athens Biennale; 29th Bienal de São Paulo; and she represented Spain at the 2011 Venice Biennale.

**BASIR MAHMOOD** (b. 1985 Lahore, Pakistan) studied in Lahore at the Beaconhouse National University, and received a yearlong fellowship from Akademie Schloss Solitude in Stuttgart, Germany, in 2011. In order to engage with situations around him, he ponders upon embedded social and historical terrains of the ordinary, as well as his personal milieu. Using video, film, or photograph, Mahmood weaves various threads of thoughts, findings and insights into poetic sequences and various forms of narratives. Since 2011, his works have been widely shown, including recent exhibitions at the Sharjah Biennial 11; Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo; Yinchuan Biennial, Yinchuan, China; Contour Biennale 8, Mechelen; Tableaux Vivants, Fondation Etrillard, Paris, France; 10th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany and Freedom of Movement at Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.

**DEIMANTAS NARKEVIČIUS** was born in 1964 in Utena, Lithuania, and lives and works in Vilnius. He graduated from the Art Academy in Vilnius as a sculptor and spent a year in London in 1992/93. On his return to Lithuania he was concerned with site-specific objects but a strong interest in narrative led him to record interviews and conversations with artists. This process evolved into an exploration of different narrative structures through film and video, the work for which Narkevičius is now best known. Narkevičius is one of the most consistent and widely recognised Lithuanian artists internationally. He represented his country at the 49th Venice Biennale in 2001 and exhibited at the 50th Venice Biennale in 2003.

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